NUMB. DIV.

The SPECTATOR.

Lepus tute es, & pulpamentum quæris. Ter.

Wedneſday, October 8. 1712.

IT is a great Convenience to thoſe who want Wit to furniſh out a Converſation, that there is ſomething or other in all Companies where it is wanted ſubſtituted in its Stead, which, according to their Taſte does the Buſineſs as well. Of this Nature is the agreeable Paſtime in Country-Halls of Croſs-Purpoſes, Queſtions and Commands, and the like. A little ſuperior to theſe are thoſe who can play at Crambo, or cap Verſes. Then above them are ſuch as can make Verſes, that is Rhime; and among thoſe who have the Latin Tongue, ſuch as uſed to make what they call golden Verſes. Commend me alſo to thoſe who have not Brains enough for any of theſe Exerciſes, and yet do not give up their Pretenſions to Mirth. Theſe can ſlap you on the Back unawares, laugh loud, aſk you how you do with a Twang on your Shoulders, ſay you are dull to Day, and laugh a Voluntary to put you in Humour; the laborious Way among the minor Poets, of making things come into ſuch and ſuch a Shape, as that of an Egg, an Hand, an Ax, or any thing that no Body had ever thought on before for that Purpoſe, or which would have coſt a great deal of Pains to accompliſh it if they did. But all theſe Methods, tho' they are mechanical, and may be arrived at with the ſmalleſt Capacity, do not ſerve an honeſt Gentleman who wants Wit for his ordinary Occaſions; therefore it is abſolutely neceſſary that the Poor in Imagination ſhould have ſomething which may be ſerviceable to them at all Hours upon all common Occurrences. That which we call Punning is therefore greatly affected by Men of ſmall Intellects. Theſe Men need not be concerned with you for the whole Sentence, but if they can ſay a quaint thing, or bring in a Word which ſounds like any one Word you have ſpoken to them, they can turn the Diſcourſe, or diſtract you ſo that you cannot go on, and by Conſequence if they cannot be as witty as you are, they can hinder your being any wittier than they are. Thus if you talk of a Candle, he *can deal* with you; and if you aſk to help you to ſome Bread, a Punſter ſhould think himſelf very ill *bred* if he did not; and if he is not as well *bred* as your ſelf, he hopes for *Grains* of Allowance. If you do not underſtand that laſt Fancy, you muſt recollect that Bread is made of Grain; and ſo they go on for ever, without Poſſibility of being exhauſted.

There are another Kind of People of ſmall Faculties, who ſupply want of Wit with want of Breeding; and becauſe Women are both by Nature and Education more offended at any thing which is immodeſt than we Men are, theſe are ever harping upon things they ought not to allude to, and deal mightily in double Meanings. Every one's own Obſervation will ſuggeſt Inſtances enough of this Kind, without my mentioning any; for your double Meaners are diſperſed up and down through all Parts of Town or City where there are any to offend, in order to ſet off themſelves. Theſe Men are mighty loud Laughers, and held very pretty Gentlemen with the fillier and unbred Part of Womankind. But above all already mentioned, or any who ever were, or ever can be in the World, the happieſt and ſureſt to be pleaſant are a Sort of People whom we have not indeed lately heard much of, and thoſe are your *Biters*.

A Biter is one who tells you a thing you have no Reaſon to diſbelieve in it ſelf; and perhaps has given you, before he bit you, no Reaſon to diſbelieve it for his ſaying it; and if you give him Credit, laughs in your Face, and triumphs that he has deceived you. In a Word, a Biter is one who thinks you a Fool, becauſe you do not think him a Knave. This Deſcription of him one may inſiſt upon to be a juſt one, for what elſe but a Degree of Knavery is it, to depend upon Deceit for what you gain of another, be it in Point of Wit, or Intereſt, or any thing elſe?

This Way of Wit is called *Biting*, by a Metaphor taken from Beaſts of Prey, which devour harmleſs and unarm'd Animals, and look upon them as their Food wherever they meet them. The Sharpers about Town very ingeniouſly underſtood themſelves to

to be to the undesigning Part of Mankind what Foxes are to Lambs, and therefore used the Word *Biting* to express any Exploit wherein they had over-reach'd any innocent and inadvertent Man of his Purse. These Rascals of late Years have been the Gallants of the Town, and carry'd it with a fashionable haughty Air, to the Discouragement of Modesty and all honest Arts. Shallow Fops, who are govern'd by the Eye, and admire every thing that struts in Vogue, took up from the Sharpers the Phrase of *Biting*, and used it upon all Occasions, either to disown any nonsensical Stuff they should talk themselves, or evade the Force of what was reasonably said by others. Thus when one of these cunning Creatures was enter'd into a Debate with you, whether it was practicable in the present State of Affairs to accomplish such a Proposition, and you thought he had let fall what destroy'd his Side of the Question, as soon as you look'd with an Earnestness ready to lay hold of it, he immediately cry'd, *Bite*, and you were immediately to acknowledge all that Part was in Jest. They carry this to all the Extravagance imaginable, and if one of these Witlings knows any Particulars which may give Authority to what he says, he is still the more ingenious if he imposes upon your Credulity. I remember a remarkable Instance of this Kind. There came up a shrewd young Fellow to a plain young Man, his Countryman, and taking him aside with a grave concern'd Countenance, goes on at this rate: I see you here, and have you heard nothing out of *Yorkshire*---- You look so surpriz'd you could not have heard of it---- and yet the Particulars are such, that it cannot be false: I am sorry I am got into it so far, that I now must tell you; but I know not but it may be for your Service to know---- On *Tuesday* last, just after Dinner---- you know his Manner is to smoke, opening his Box, your Father fell down dead in an Apoplexy. The Youth shew'd the filial Sorrow which he ought---- Upon which the witty Man cry'd, *Bite, there was nothing in all this*----

To put an End to this silly, pernicious, frivolous Way at once, I will give the Reader one late Instance of a Bite, which no Biter for the future will ever be able to equal, tho' I heartily wish him the same Occasion. It is a Superstition with some Surgeons, who beg the Bodies of condemn'd Malefactors, to go to the Goal, and bargain for the Carkass with the Criminal himself. A good honest Fellow did so last Sessions, and was admitted to the condemn'd Men on the Morning wherein they died. The Surgeon communicated his Business, and fell into Discourse with a little Fellow, who refused Twelve Shillings, and insisted upon Fifteen for his Body. The Fellow, who kill'd the Officer of *Newgate*, very forwardly, and like a Man who was willing to deal, told him, Look you, Mr. Surgeon, that little dry Fellow, who has been half-starv'd all his Life, and is now half-dead with Fear, cannot answer your Purpose. I have ever lived high and freely, my Veins are full, I have not pined in Imprisonment; you see my Crest swells to your Knife, and after *Jack-Catch* has done, upon my Honour you'll find me as found as e'er a Bullock in any of the Markets. Come, for Twenty Shillings I am your Man---- Says the Surgeon, Done, there's a Guinea---- This witty Rogue took the Money, and assoon as he had it in his Fist, cries, *Bite, I am to be hang'd in Chains.*

ADVERTISEMENTS.

By Her Majesty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, this present Wednesday, being the 8th of October, will be presented a Play call'd, The Spanish Fryar, or, The Double Discovery. The Part of the Fryar by Mr. Bullock, Lorenzo by Mr. Wilks, Gomez by Mr. Norris, Elvira by Mrs. Oldfield, Torrismond by Mr. Powell, Bertran by Mr. Mills, Raymond by Mr. Bowman, Pedro by Mr. Bickerstaff. By her Majesty's Command no Persons are to be admitted behind the Scenes.

The famous Spanish Blacking for Gentlemens Shoes that ever was invented or used; it making them always look like New, never daubs the Hands in putting on, or soils the Stockins in wearing; neither hath it the ordinary Gloss of German-Balls, or the intolerable noisome Stink of Size, but is of an agreeable Scent. It indeed makes the Shoes look extreamly Neat and mightily preserves the Leather: All that use it Admire it, and those that once try it, will never use any thing else. Sold for 1s. 6d. the Pot, with Directions, (which will last 3 or 4 Months) only at Mr. John Hannam's, a Toyshop, at the 3 Angels near Fotter-Lane in Cheapside.

Famous Drops for Hypocondriack Melancholly: Which effectually cure on the Spot, by rectifying the Stomach and Blood, cleansing them from all Impurities, and giving a new Turn to their Ferment, attenuating all viscous tenacious Humours (which make the Head heavy, clog the Spirits, trouble the Mind; and cause the deepest Melancholly, with direful Views and black Reflections) comforting the Brain and Nerves, composing the hurried Thoughts and introducing bright lively Ideas and pleasant Briskness, instead of dismal Apprehensions and dark Incumbrance of the Soul, setting the Intellectuals at Liberty to act with Courage, Serenity and steady Chearfulness, and causing a visible extensive Joy to reign in the room of uneasy Doubts, Fears, &c. for which they may be truly esteem'd infallible. Price 3s. 6d. a Bottle, with Directions. Sold only at Mr. Bell's Bookseller at the Cross-Keys and Bible in Cornhill near the Royal-Exchange.

An Incomparable pleasant Tincture to restore the Sense of Smelling, tho' lost for many Years. A few Drops of which, being snuffed up the Nose, infallibly cures those who have lost their Smell, let it proceed from what Cause soever; it admirably opens all manner of Obstructions of the Olfactory, or smelling Nerves, comforts and strengthens the Head and Brain, and revives the Smelling Faculty to a Miracle, effectually removing whatever is the Cause of the Disorder of that Sense, and Perfectly Cures, so as to cause the Person to smell as quick and well as any one in the World. Price 2s. 6d. a Bottle. Sold only at Mr. Payne's Toy-shop at the Angel and Crown in St. Paul's Church-yard near Cheapside, with Directions.

This is to give Notice, That the Royal Chymical Wash-Balls for the Hands and Face, are removed from Mr. Lambert's the Glovers, to prevent the Publick's being imposed on by Counterfeits, and are now sold only at Mr. Allcroft's Toyshop at the Blue-Coat-Boy against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill, and at Mrs. Giles's, Milliner, next Hercules-Pillars Alley by the Temple. They have above these 8 Years been largely experienc'd and highly commended by all that use them, and that for making the Skin so delicately soft and smooth, as not to be parallel'd by either Wash, Powder, Cosmetick, &c. they being indeed real Beautifiers of the Skin, by taking off all Deformities, as Tetters, Ring-worms, Morphew, Sun-burn, Scurf, Pimples, Pits or Redness of the Small-pox, and keeping it of a lasting and extream Whiteness. They soon alter red or rough Hands, and are admirable in Shaving the Head, for they not only give a more exquisite sharpness to the Razor, but so comfort the Brain and Nerves, as to prevent catching Cold. They are of a grateful and pleasant Scent, without the least Grain of Mercury, and are Sold only by Mr. Allcroft, and Mrs. Giles, as above, price 1s. each, and no where else in London by Retale, therefore beware of Counterfeits, which are not only ineffectual but may also prove dangerous.

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